



Integration and radicalization

This goal of this factsheet is to give a general overview of the situation of integration and radicalization of youth in the Netherlands. It contains three chapters: Introduction, Facts and figures and relevant Dutch policy.

Introduction

Increasingly, the focus has been on the integration of migrants in Dutch society during the previous years. Special attention has been given to migrant families (parenting support) and young children (Dutch language programmes in pre-school and primary school). Campaigns on anti-discrimination have also been funded.

The aim of the governmental policy called 'Diversity in youth policy' is to develop a youth policy in which general youth services and parental support reaches migrant children and their parents as well as all other families. The slogan of the programme is 'all opportunities for all children'. This approach is directed at pointing out possible problems in upbringing and growing up at an early stage. It is also aimed at getting better knowledge of the effectiveness of (preventive) approaches and interventions for these children and parents.

Facts and figures

Approximately 10% of the Dutch population belongs to an ethnic minority. The aim of the Dutch integration policy is to create a society in which everyone participates actively and fully and where people are all treated equally. Equal treatment is thus an important principle of the Dutch integration policy. Integration programmes for newcomers expect immigrants coming to the Netherlands for an extended period to speak Dutch and to become familiar with Dutch society including its most important standards and values.

Dutch policy

The government of the Netherlands considers the integration programme to be a condition of integration. The earlier mentioned requirements regarding the integration programme are codified in the Act on Integration Programme.

In June 2009, a national campaign to combat discrimination was launched. The central question of this campaign was: 'Do you have to leave yourself at home when you go outside?'. The campaign emphasized that nobody has to act differently than they really are. It also underlines that by law everyone can find a place in their direct surroundings for help and advice about discrimination and for reporting (suspicions of) discrimination. The Netherlands is the first country in Europe that settled these matters by law.



In 2009 the government started a cooperation agreement with the Union of Netherlands Municipalities (Vereniging Nederlandse Gemeenten – VNG) and 22 municipalities to decrease the overrepresentation of Moroccan-Dutch youths with regard to nuisance, crime, school dropout and unemployment. Street coaches address both youths and their parents in case of problems. They also watch out that young children are not roaming the streets at night. Municipalities can force problem families to accept help with raising their children. Police, judicial authorities and social workers work together from one location in so-called Safety Houses (Veiligheidshuizen) on tracking, prosecution and assistance. The [Reference Index for Youth at Risk](#) should help social workers and municipalities to cooperate better. The reference index is a national electronic signposting system that brings together risk signals of youth (up to 23 years), as reported by social workers.

Radicalization

In The Netherlands, there is a growing number of migrant youth that radicalize in name of Islam. These young people reject an open, pluralistic and tolerant society and in the worst case they are willing to use violence to meet their goals. The average age of the adolescents joining this group is going down. The Dutch government – both at the local and national level – cooperates with (Islamic) organizations to reach out to these groups and prevent their radicalization. Programmes have been started that are also directed at professionalizing youth workers and police in detecting signs of extreme behaviour.

Polarization and radicalization of migrant youth are being tackled mainly at the local level. Community police officers, youth and welfare workers, teachers and truancy officers work together to identify, prevent and if necessary to combat polarization and radicalization. At the central level, this local approach is supported by seven ministries and the Association of Netherlands Municipalities.

Action plan

The Ministry of Internal Affairs, involving other ministries, has launched an action plan against radicalization (2007-2011). Although this plan is not exclusively aimed at young people, they are an important target group. The plan focuses on empowering potential groups and individuals prone to radicalization, increasing the skills and competences of parents and people working with young people, and working on early detection of signs of radicalization.

The action plan aims at preventing further isolation, polarization and radicalization by inclusion (work, school, internships) of people who turn away from Dutch society and democracy. It focuses on signaling these processes at an early stage by professionals and by developing an adequate proactive approach.

For more information on other aspects of Dutch youth policy, please visit the website www.youthpolicy.nl. This website presents information on youth policy, practice and provisions in the Netherlands and contains several factsheets. These factsheets cover a wide range of subjects – from general information on the organization of youth policy in the Netherlands to more specific themes and policy areas. It also includes useful addresses and links to relevant organizations for children and youth (governmental and non-governmental) in the Netherlands.